



PRESS RELEASE

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SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL QUALITY COFFEE PROGRAM CLOSES

SAN SALVADOR— Today, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) closed its Regional Quality Coffee Program that since 2003 had given an opportune impulse to the coffee sector in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

During the closing ceremony in the San Ernesto House, in Comasagua, La Libertad, 26 new junior cuppers (coffee tasters) graduated, becoming the second graduating class in this specialty for the Salvadoran coffee sector.

USAID Director, Mark Silverman, thanked the Salvadoran government for its support and active participation, as well as the coffee institutions and producers who achieved important advances under this program.

This program contributed to the increase in specialized coffee exports from Central America and the Dominican Republic by \$17.54 million. Likewise, in this country, the program assisted the electronic auctions Cup of Excellence and Q Auctions, the business development of cooperatives and producers, the development and opening of new markets and the design of El Salvador's Coffee Marketing Plan.

Moreover, 2,500 manzanas of coffee were certified by Rainforest Alliance, two cooperatives were certified by Fair Trade, and 510 manzanas were verified under the C.A.F.E. Practices program of Starbucks.

"We feel proud to have contributed to the revitalization of the coffee sector with a focus based in quality, in response to the demand of international markets. The main strategy that guided our program was to gain the recognition quality coffee of El Salvador deserves. I think we have accomplished that," affirmed Silverman.

The Regional Quality Coffee Program also focused on training professionals in the recognition of quality coffee and the creation of innovative projects, like the Star Cuppers and Junior Cuppers.

Attendees included the Presidential Commissioner for Agriculture, Carmen Elena de Sol; the Presidential Commissioner for coffee, José Antonio Salaverría; the Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, José Emilio Suadi, and USAID Director, Mark Silverman.

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